

**Binghamton, NY** - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today at Confluence Park announced passage of \$210,000 in federal funding for a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers flood damage reduction study aimed at protecting residents and their property in the Upper Susquehanna River Basin from future floods. The funding, which Hinchey requested, was recently approved by the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water. Binghamton Mayor Matthew Ryan was on hand for the announcement.

"In 2006, we learned just how devastating a flood can be," said Hinchey who used his position on the House Appropriations Committee to secure the funding. "Homes were destroyed, families were uprooted and public infrastructure was severely damaged. To ensure that there aren't similar consequences to a future flood, we need to have a full understanding of what flood barriers need to be upgraded or repaired. That's why I requested an additional \$210,000 to initiate a feasibility study for flood damage reduction in the Upper Susquehanna River Basin. We simply have to be prepared for the next time the waters rise."

In 2009, Hinchey secured \$90,000 to commence a reconnaissance study, which at the time was one of only 20 such studies slated for initiation by the Army Corps. A draft of this study is now under final review by the Corps and expected to be finalized soon. The new funding Hinchey announced today, will follow on the reconnaissance study, establishing the feasibility of a number of projects needed to protect people, property and public infrastructure in the Basin.

"While the damage was extraordinary, it is estimated that the work done by the Army Corps prior to the 2006 flood prevented \$450 million in damage," said Hinchey. "With a relatively small upfront investment in flood mitigation and prevention, we can prevent a lot more damage, as well as save a lot more money down the line. And by upgrading and improving flood walls and channels we also create jobs. It makes good economic sense, it helps save lives and it protects public and personal property. "

Hinchey also highlighted the recent approval by the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee of \$500,000 he requested for a second phase of much-needed flood prevention work in the City of Binghamton. The city will use the new funding to continue correcting the unsatisfactory conditions of the South Side Flood Channel, which have already been identified as a problem by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Hinchey secured \$462,000 in last year's bill for the first phase of the project and for similar work in the Town of Union.

While delivering funding to prevent and mitigate the impacts of future floods, Hinchey has also worked to ensure the fairness of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) flood map modernization program. In July, the Congressman successfully worked to pass the

provisions of the Flood Insurance Fairness Act -- legislation he introduced to allow property owners who will face a new requirement to purchase flood insurance to delay the need to purchase flood insurance for five years, or pay a reduced fee for five years if they prefer to have the insurance. Hinchey also worked to ensure that property owners who successfully challenge a FEMA flood risk assessment are provided with financial reimbursement for costs incurred during the appeal process.

The new funding for the flood damage reduction study and the repairs to the south side flood channel must now be approved by the full Appropriations Committee and the full House. Hinchey said the most important hurdle has now been surpassed and he expects the funding to be finalized later this year.